

I believe that President Tadic deserves the United States' respect and support as a democratic and reformist leader in a historically unstable region. He has fought for democracy and equality against the tide of nationalistic fervor unleashed by former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, and in many ways his actions speak loudly of his leadership and bravery. He is leading his country in a bold, new direction of cooperation with the West and is diligently working to ensure Serbia's integration into the European Union and NATO, as well as partner with the United States. President Tadic represents the future of Serbia and the Balkans and we should support him in his struggles and endeavors. I ask my colleagues to join with me to commend his leadership, applaud his courage, and renew our commitment to peace and stability in the Balkans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on Monday evening, July 11, 2005, due to United Airlines flight 950 experiencing mechanical problems. My plane was forced to return to San Francisco International Airport, requiring me to travel on a later flight.

I would like the RECORD to reflect how I would have voted had I been present:

On rollcall vote No. 363 I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall vote No. 364 I would have voted "yea."

FOSTERING ADOPTION TO FURTHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ACT OF 2005

HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join today with my colleagues, Mrs. BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. SNYDER of Arkansas, and Mr. BOUSTANY of Louisiana, in introducing legislation that corrects an inequity in our Nation's higher education laws.

The foster care system in our country is not perfect. However, for all its flaws, it does provide some very genuine benefits. For example, those youth who graduate high school while still in foster care are afforded every opportunity to attend college and receive full federal financial aid benefits.

Unfortunately, those who are fortunate enough to be adopted into loving homes as teenagers are not given this same consideration. Under current law, children who are adopted and thus leave the foster care system are not considered "independent students" and are therefore considered for financial aid based on the income of the adoptive family. This is a barrier for families looking to adopt older children, but may not have saved for college—and it should be changed.

This important legislation would adjust the definition of "independent student" to include foster care youth who are adopted from the

foster care system after their 13th birthday. Accordingly, when the adopted children apply for federal financial aid, they will not be penalized because eligibility would be determined by the adopted student's ability to pay, not the ability of his parents to do so.

Statistics show that older children who are adopted from the foster care system are more likely to attend college, have stable lives and have a permanent family. Conversely, of those who "aged-out" of foster care over three years: Only 54% had earned a high school diploma; Only 14.5% had graduated from a four-year college; and Between 25–44% had experienced homelessness.

It is estimated that approximately 20,000 youth "age out" of the foster care system each year and, of that number, nearly 30% are incarcerated in the first year. Currently, there are 523,000 children in foster care and nearly half of those children are over the age of ten.

These statistics show that when given the opportunity to move into a loving home, those who are still in the system are more likely to be successful. Making this minor change to current law can do so much to change the lives of these youngsters and the families looking to adopt them. But when these teenagers are forced to choose between adoption and federal financial aid to attend college, the odds are against them.

Families who adopt teenagers are remarkable. But these adoptions are rare. This legislation is designed not only to create greater access to college for those who are adopted but also to encourage adoption of older children by creating an incentive—not a barrier—to parents looking to add to their family by adopting a child out of the foster care system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with me and my colleagues in supporting and enacting this common sense, bipartisan legislation.

MILITARY PERSONNEL FINANCIAL SERVICES

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the House of Representatives for its work on H.R. 458, the Military Personnel Financial Services Protection Act. Simply put, this bill solves the problem of rogue predatory lenders and goes after high-cost abusive lenders who seek to take advantage of the young men and women dutifully serving in our military. Our servicemen and women deserve the protection of Congress not only on the battlefield but right here at home. In times of war it is all too often that our military personnel find themselves in stressful financial situations and hardships, through no fault of their own, due to unforeseen call-ups. They are forced to leave good paying jobs for significantly less money and still provide for their families. This is an incredibly difficult task, like sticking a circle through a square. And what do rogue predatory lenders want to do, Mr. Speaker? They seek to prey on these individuals with inappropriate sales and impositions such as garnishing military wages, collection calls to a service member's chain of command, and deceptive marketing. Congress has the responsi-

bility to crack down on unscrupulous lenders who use deceptive financial practices to make a quick buck off of our uniformed service members. H.R. 458 does that, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague from Illinois, Mr. RAHM EMANUEL said, it is time to end a culture on military bases that too often favors financial interests over the interests of our troops, their families, and their futures. I urge our colleagues in the Senate to give this legislation a vote and continue on with this body's efforts to protect our service men and women.

CELEBRATING MS. ODIE RICH

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to recognize a remarkable woman and Pickett County, Tennessee's oldest known living resident.

Ms. Odie (Riley) Rich was born on December 10, 1901 in Pickett County, where she has lived all her life. Ms. Rich is the daughter of the late William and Irene Riley.

Ms. Odie married A.L. Rich on December 23, 1923 when she was 22-years-old. When asked by her granddaughter, Paula Perry, in the local newspaper, where her wedding dress came from, Ms. Rich replied "I made it myself."

Mr. and Mrs. Rich raised several children, Dorthena Price, Paul Rich (deceased), Eladean Tompkins, Jack Rich, Morris Rich, Odell Rich, and Carolyn Long. She has 20 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great grandchildren.

Ms. Odie is a wonderful witness to history and the times. She remembers when women first got the right to vote, having voted for the first time herself in 1921. The first vehicle her and her husband owned was a 1941 Chevy truck. Up until then, they traveled by horse or mule. When asked how she rode with a dress on, she commented "Why, side saddle of course!" However, she never learned to drive an automobile. She remarked that if she ever learned that she would have been a speed demon.

Today, Ms. Rich still lives on the old home place and loves to do gardening and canning. Ms. Rich is an endearing character that has provided insight into the past all the while bringing joy and happiness to her loved ones and neighbors. May God continue to bless Ms. Odie Rich.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, on July 11, 2005, I was in my district participating in the first meeting of the New Jersey Flood Mitigation Task Force. This Task Force is working to help prevent the devastating flooding that occurred for a number of my constituents earlier this year. Due to the schedule, I missed rollcall votes Nos. 363 and 364. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: rollcall No. 363 "aye" and rollcall No. 364 "aye."